

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SUBJECT: FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT COLIN MOYLE WITHDRAWN
FROM BY-ELECTION

REF: (A) WELLINGTON 0409, (B) 76 WELLINGTON 4756

SUMMARY: FORMER LABOUR MP, COLIN MOYLE, UNDER PRESSURE FROM LABOUR PARTY, HAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE MANGERE DISTRICT BY-ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MONTH. MOYLE'S WITHDRAWAL HAS ENGENDERED SOME BITTERNESS WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY AND BROUGHT ABOUT THE RESIGNATION OF GORDON MUIR AS CHAIRMAN OF THE MANGERE ELECTORATE. THE LABOUR PARTY ITSELF AND OPPOSITION LEADER BILL ROWLING HAVE SUFFERED FROM "THE MOYLE AFFAIR", WHILE PRIME MINISTER MULDOON'S REPUTATION AS A FORMIDABLE GUT FIGHTER HAS BEEN ENHANCED. END SUMMARY.

1. ON FEBRUARY 11 FORMER MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE COLIN MOYLE WITHDREW FROM THE BY-ELCTION RAVET FOR MANGERE, THE SEAT WHICH HE HELD IN PARLIAMENT UNTIL LAST DECEMBER 22. MOYLE VIGOROUSLY DENIED THE HOMOSEXUAL ALLEGATIONS WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT HIS DOWNFALL AND CHARGED THAT HE HAD BEEN VICTIMIZED BY A SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN OF POLITICAL
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ASSASSINATION. MANGERE ELECTORATE CHAIRMAN, GORDON MUIR, RESIGNED SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE CHARGES THAT MOYLE HAD BEEN THE VICTIM OF A POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY AND THAT THE POSITION OF OPPOSITION LEADER ROWLING WAS NOT ON AN ENTIRELY SAFE FOOTING.

2. A HOT CONTEST IS UNDER WAY TO NAME A LABOUR PARTY

CANDIDATE TO CONTEST THE MANGERE ELECTION AGAINST THE NATIONAL PARTY. MOYLE'S OWN CHOICE IS CLEARLY MRS. DOROTHY JELICICH, FORMER MP FOR HAMILTON WEST WHO WAS DEFEATED IN THE NOVEMBER 1975 GENERAL ELECTIONS. THE OTHER MAJOR CONTESTANT IS LABOUR PARTY JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL MOORE WHO UNTIL HIS DEFEAT IN 1975 WAS THE YOUNGEST LABOUR MP. PART OF MOYLE'S OPPOSITION TO MOORE WAS OCCASIONED BY THE LATTER'S JUMPING THE GUN WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS OWN CANDIDACY EVEN BEFORE MOYLE PUBLICLY WITHDREW.

3. COMMENT: THE LOSS OF COLIN MOYLE IS A BLOW TO THE LABOUR PARY. PERSONABLE AND INTELLIGENT, MOYLE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEN IN THE OPPOSITION. GENERALLY REGARDED, EVEN BY NATIONAL PARTY SYMPATHIZERS, AS A SUCCESSFUL MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE UNDER THE LAST LABOUR GOVERNMENT, HE HAS BEEN THOUGHT OF AS A MAN OF REAL LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL, EVEN A POSSIBLE FUTURE PRIME MINISTER.

WHILE MOYLE'S POLITICAL CAREER IS IN A STATE OF PUBLIC DISGRACE, THE REPUTATION FOR POLITICAL SHREWDNESS OF OPPOSITION LEADER ROWLING HAS HARDLY BEEN ENHANCED, NOR HAS THAT OF ROWLING'S FORMER MINISTER OF POLICE MICHAEL CONNELLY, WHO DID NOT CAUTION ROWLING AGAINST PROCEEDING HASTILY. ALTHOUGH MOYLE MISLED ROWLING ABOUT THE ACTUAL RATHER SORDID CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE JUNE 1975 "MOYLE AFFAIR", ROWLING MIGHT HAE CHECKED FIRST WITH CONNELLY BEFORE DEMANDING THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH EVENTUALLY TRAPPED MOYLE IN A WEB OF INCONSISTENT EXPLANATIONS OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INCIDENT. HAD ROWLING EXERCISED ORDINARY CAUTION HE MIGHT HAVE CHECKED FIRST WITH CONNELLY, WHO WAS MINISTER OF POLICE IN JUNE 1975 WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED WHEN MOYLE PICKED UPAN UNDERCOVER POLICEMAN WITH APPARENT HOMOSEXUAL INTENT. BUT ROWLING DID NOT DO SO, AND CONNELLY, HIMSELF WITH SOME PRETENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE LEADER-POOR LABOUR PARY, FAILED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN ALERTING ROWLING TO THE DANGERS OF ASKING FOR THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY. THUS, CONNELLY'S REPUTATION HAS ALSO BEEN HURT, IN SPITE OF ROWLING'S PUBLICLY ABSOLVING HIM OF ANY BLAME.

THE ELECTION RACE IN MANGERE BEARS WATCHING. HERETOFORE ALWAYS A SAFE LABOUR SEAT, DISSENSION WITHING THE ELECTORATE MIGHT THIS TIME WEAKEN LABOUR'S PROSPECTS. PRIME MINISTER MULDOON, WHOSE GUT FIGHTER CHARGES IN PARALIAMENT AGAINST MOYLE EVENTUALLY BROUGHT MOYLE DOWTIC WILL BE PUSHING TO

NAME THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE NATIONAL PARTY CANDIDATE
TO CONTEST MANGERE. MEANWHILE, EARLIER CHARGES THAT
MULDOON'S POLITICAL IN-FIGHTING IN THE "MOYLE AFFAIR"
HAD BEEN TOO VICIOUS FOR GENTEEL NEW ZEALAND, HAVE BEEN
STILLED IN THE AFTERMATH OF MOYLE'S POLITICAL RUIN.
SELDEN

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